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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-02 ADP-00 /005 R

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DRAFTED BY: NEA/ IAI: JTMCANDREW
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R 091745 Z MAR 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS STATE 039838

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TO CAIRO INFO TEL AVIV AMMAN BEIRUT DHAHRAN JERUSALEM JIDDA KUWAIT MANAMA TEHRAN ALGIERS TRIPOLI TUNIS RABAT LONDON PARIS MOSCOW ROME USUN NEW YORK NATO BAGHDAD AND SANAA BY POUCH MARCH 3, 1973 FROM SECSTATE REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE U N C L A S S I F I E D STATE 039838

E. O. 11652: N. A.
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJECT: WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST

REF: CAIRO 654

FOLLOWING IS EXCERPT OF MIDDLE EAST PORTION OF WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN' S PRESS BRIEFING MARCH 1, 1973:

QUOTE: MR. ZIEGLER: THE MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER GOLDA MEIR BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER 11:00, AT 11:05, TO BE SPECIFIC, AND ENDED AT 12:40.
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THE TALKS TODAY WERE CONDUCTED IN THE FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE WHICH IS THE USUAL ATMOSPHERE THAT EXISTS WHEN THE

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PRIME MINISTER AND THE PRESIDENT HOLD DISCUSSIONS. THEY WERE CANDID AND USEFUL, I BELIEVE, TO BOTH THE UNITED STATES AND TO ISRAEL.

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSED THE PRESENT SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND PARTICULARLY WAYS OF MOVING TOWARD PEACE. THE PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR PAST UNITED STATES ASSISTANCE AND DESCRIBED ISRAEL' S PRESENT MILITARY AND ECONOMIC POSITION.

PRESIDENT NIXON ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER OF CONTINUING UNITED STATES SUPPORT.

Q. IN WHAT FIELDS?

MR. ZIEGLER: WE PROVIDE ISRAEL ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SUPPORT, PL 480 PROGRAMS AND VARIOUS CREDIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

AS YOU KNOW, THE PRESIDENT NOW HAS MET WITH KING HUSSEIN AND WITH MR. ISMAIL, AND THE PRIME MINISTER TODAY, AND HAS HAD VERY FRANK DISCUSSIONS ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND ON THE SITUATION IN THE AREA. THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT HE FELT TODAY' S MEETING WAS VERY CONSTRUCTIVE.

WE HAVE, AS YOU KNOW, AND AS I HAVE JUST STATED; BEEN TALKING TO THE PARTIES IN THE AREA. THERE HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF LONG CONFRONTATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT IMMEDIATE SOLUTIONS. BUT AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, AND AS THE PRESIDENT HAS SAID, WE ARE INTERESTED IN DOING WHAT WE CAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE SITUATION IN THAT AREA.

Q. AS A RESULT OF THESE THREE CONVERSATIONS, DOES THE PRESIDENT NOW BELIEVE THAT WE ARE IN FACT GOING TO MOVE OFF DEAD CENTER, TO USE HIS EXPRESSION?

MR. ZIEGLER: AS I MENTIONED, WE HAVE BEEN TALKING TO
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THE PARTIES INVOLVED, AND THIS, AS I JUST SAID, HAS BEEN A LONG PERIOD OF CONFRONTATION, SO WE SHOULD NOT EXPECT ANY IMMEDIATE SOLUTION, BUT WE ARE GOING TO REMAIN IN CONTACT, AND AS A RESULT OF THESE VERY CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN HELD, I THINK IT WOULD BE INADVISABLE TO EXPECT ANY EASY OR INSTANT, OR I SHOULD SAY IMMEDIATE, RESULTS.

THE OBJECTIVE, HOWEVER, REMAINS ONE OF WHAT WE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MOVING TOWARDS PEACE IN THE AREA.

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Q. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

MR. ZIEGLER: I DON' T KNOW THAT THERE IS A SPECIFIC STEP I CAN REFER TO IN TERMS OF WHAT HAPPENS NEXT. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IS THE FACT THAT THERE HAVE BEEN VERY STRONG DISCUSSIONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE SITUATION IN THE AREA AND THESE CONTACTS WILL CONTINUE. I CAN' T PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT.

Q: WOULD YOU WELCOME CONTACT BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE ARABS TO DISCUSS THIS?

MR. ZIEGLER: WE HAVE ALWAYS SAID THAT THERE CAN' T BE A SETTLEMENT IN THE AREA WITHOUT DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

Q: THERE CAN' T?

MR. ZIEGLER: THERE CANNOT. THIS HAS BEEN THE UNITED STATES POSITION ALWAYS, THAT THERE CANNOT BE A FINAL SETTLEMENT IN THE AREA WITHOUT DIRECT TALKS BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

Q: ON THAT SAME SUBJECT, IN THE HOPES OF GETTING SOME ELABORATION, THERE HAS, HOWEVER, BEEN SOME RENEWAL OF SPECULATION OR THOUGHT THAT THERE COULD BE SOME THIRD PARTY TYPE TALKS, THAT IS, TALKS THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY. THERE HAS BEEN A RENEWAL OF THAT. WAS THIS SUBJECT BROUGHT UP TODAY, AND IF SO, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT IT OR WHAT IS THE CURRENT AMERICAN POSITION ON THAT?
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MR. ZIEGLER: I CAN' T GO INTO ANY FURTHER DETAIL ABOUT THE DISCUSSIONS THAT WERE HELD TODAY. I THINK YOU SHOULD BE SOMEWHAT CAUTIOUS IN DRAWING EXTENSIVE CONCLUSIONS, AND I WOULD SUGGEST THAT YOU ASSESS THE SITUATION ON THE BASIS THAT WE HAVE HAD CONSTRUCTIVE TALKS WITH THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE AREA, WITH THE OBJECTIVE BEING TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE IN THE AREA, BUT AS TO WHAT THE NEXT STEP IS, WHAT WILL DEVELOP OR WHAT CAN DEVELOP, I CANNOT PREDICT AND I CANNOT SAY.

Q: FIFTEEN MONTHS AGO, OR WHATEVER, YOUR STATEMENT FOLLOWING HER VISIT WAS MUCH STRONGER. YOU TALKED ABOUT SUPPORTING THEIR MODERNIZATION EFFORT, THEIR MILITARY STRENGTH IN THE MIDEAST. IT WAS MUCH STRONGER COMPARED TO WHAT YOU SAY NOW. IS THIS A DELIBERATE BACKING AWAY FROM THAT POSITION?

MR. ZIEGLER: THE UNITED STATES, AS YOU KNOW, HAS

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AN ON- GOING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL, AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, WHICH CONSIST PRIMARILY OF CREDITS FOR THE PURCHASE OF U. S. PRODUCTS AND U. S. GRAIN UNDER THE PL 480 PROGRAM.

THE PRESIDENT, AS I SAID IN MY INITIAL COMMENTS, ASSURED PRIME MINISTER MEIR OF CONTINUED U. S. SUPPORT.

WE ALSO HAVE AN ON- GOING MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL, AND I MADE THE POINT AT THE VERY OUTSET, WHICH I DON' T THINK SUPPORTS THE PREMISE OF YOUR QUESTION, WHEN I SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT ASSURED HER OF CONTINUING SUPPORT.

Q: WELL, IS THIS A NEW MLITARY BUYING PROGRAM ON THE PART OF ISRAEL, OR IS IT ON- GOING?

MR. ZIEGLER: WE HAVE AN ON- GOING MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL AND THIS IS SOMETHING THAT CONTINUES. IT HAS NOT BEEN OUR PRACTICE AND IT IS NOT OUR PRACTICE TO DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP, BUT WE HAVE HAD AND CONTINUE TO HAVE AN ON- GOING RELATION-

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COPENHAGEN
DUBLIN
THE HAGUE
LUXEMBOURG
OSLO
BRUSSELS

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